

Zebra Mussel Task Force (ZMTF)



Zebra Mussels are causing significant economic and ecological problems throughout many areas of the United States, and the discovery of live adult zebra mussels in Lake George in December 1999 is a matter of serious public concern. If Zebra Mussels become established in Lake George, they will displace native species, impact public and private water intake systems, degrade the aquatic ecosystem and cost millions of dollars in damages. Accordingly, it is the finding of the Lake George Zebra Mussel Task Force that coordinated Zebra Mussel prevention and control efforts are urgently needed to raise public awareness and avoid future introduction of this and other aquatic nuisance species in Lake George.

Formed in March 2000, the Zebra Mussel Task Force is an ad hoc committee, comprised of representatives of over a dozen State and local agencies, research and educational institutions, private companies, not-for-profit organizations and concerned individuals, which share in on-going efforts to preserve and protect Lake George. The Task Force was formed as a sub-committee of the Oversight Committee for Lake George-*Planning for the Future*, a larger group developing a new watershed management plan for the lake. The Task Force has been a focal point to develop a coordinated community strategy to combat Zebra Mussels and report on related actions by individual member groups.

Task Force Recommendations For Member Groups

Heightened public awareness of the potential impacts of Zebra Mussels to Lake George, of entry pathways and of preventative measures is a primary objective and member groups are recommended to undertake public education efforts consistent with the Task Force's guidelines for a coordinated educational program.

Hand-harvesting adult Zebra Mussels, such as occurred at the single identified colonization site in 2000, has the potential to avoid or delay a permanent colonization of Lake George thereby obviating untold future damages and therefore should continue to be supported by member groups with such resources committed for this effort.

Continue coordinated monitoring of the lake for the presence of Zebra Mussels and encourage efforts to inform the public of a program to identify and report the presence of Zebra Mussels.

Effective enforcement of current regulations which require the inspection of vessels prior to launch for the presence of aquatic plants and organisms and their removal should be supported by member groups.

Member groups should promote the development of Zebra Mussel Decontamination Stations at public

and private launches and marinas around the lake.

Scientific investigation of the lake, its nutrient conditions and of Zebra Mussels which furthers understanding of Zebra Mussels and methods to prevent or control them should be encouraged by the member groups .

Zebra Mussel Task Force Activities To Date

A variety of steps have been taken in a coordinated effort to prevent Zebra Mussel colonization of Lake George.

- The funding of several scientific, investigatory, public education and enforcement initiatives.

- The compilation of \$50,000 in grant applications.

- The hand harvesting of scores of thousands of Zebra Mussels.

- The public distribution of some 1,000 special Zebra Mussel identification kits.

- The personal contact of hundreds of business operators.

- The distribution of information to public via media, Internet, displays and word of mouth.

- The assemblage of a body of information on Zebra Mussel and Zebra Mussel prevention.

- The distribution of thousands of special "Zebra Mussel Alert" boat registration forms.

- The investigation of scores of locations for nutrient conditions suitable for Zebra Mussel habitat.

Participating Sub-Committee Members

- Darrin Freshwater Institute

- Town of Bolton

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

- Lake George Association, Inc.

- Harris Bay Yacht Club

- The Fund for Lake George, Inc.

- NYS Department of State

- NYS Department of Transportation

- NYS Lake George Park Commission

Contact Us!

For more information about the Zebra Mussel Task Force and how you can help, please contact the [LGA](#) @ (518) 668-3558.